

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1833
ANSWERED ON:03.03.2003
EXTINCTION OF ENDANGERED DOLPHINS
RENUKA CHOWDHURY

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the highly endangered dolphins are facing a serious threat from mechanised boats used by tourists and others;
- (b) if so, their latest population indicating comparative figures pertaining to the three earlier censuses; and
- (c) the steps taken/to be taken to protect and promote this endangered species?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI DILIP SINGH JU DEV)

- a) While entanglement in the fishing nets, reduction of habitat and pollution are the major threats to dolphin populations, there are reports of serious adverse impact of mechanized boats used by tourists on dolphins.
- b) Although no systemic population survey for dolphins has been done so far but some population estimates are available. During late 1980s the population of Ganges river dolphin was estimated to be around 3000 to 4000, and, as per a recent survey conducted by World Wide Fund for Nature - India (WWF-India) the population is between 1800 and 2000. Population estimate of Irrawaddy dolphin found in coastal waters of India is available only for Chilika lake in Orissa. While there were about 79 dolphins in Chilika lake in 1998, the present population estimate is around 60 dolphins.
- c) The steps taken to protect and promote dolphins include:
 - 1. All the species of dolphins have been put in the Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 thereby providing the highest degree of protection under the law.
 - 2. Protected Area network has been established in the country for conservation of dolphins.
 - 3. Education and awareness programmes have been conducted to promote conservation of dolphins at more than 1000 locations along the riverbanks. Chilika Development Authority has also conducted awareness programmes involving Non Government Organisations (NGOs) for fishermen in Chilika area.